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"CHIVE"

15 JUN 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, CHIVE Task Force

THROUGH: Director of Central Reference

SUBJECT: Comments on Proposed Referral File Service (RFS)

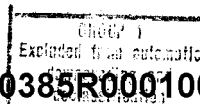
1. This memorandum comments on the above subject as requested by [REDACTED] of your staff on 24 May 1967. The remarks which follow are based on information about the proposed RFS derived from discussion with [REDACTED] and from two CHIVE memoranda (W-14-67, 15 May 1967 and T-1-67, 15 February 1967).

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2. It is my general impression that the RFS proposal is more related to original CHIVE plans than to current OCR requirements. The aim appears to be to develop a somewhat elaborate inventory of both research components and their documentary resources, designed to be set up on cards and eventually converted to machine control. The research components may be requested to provide file inventories down to the headings on the individual file folders.

3. It is apparent that much thought has gone into the design of the RFS system but it is not clear that the scope and depth of the system have been adequately related to the requirements of most OCR customers for the kind of support which it is proposed to provide. By and large, analysts in the research components of the intelligence community are already cognizant through informal communications channels of who does what and who maintains which files. The RFS will therefore be employed chiefly by collectors and other Agency personnel outside of the research components in order to establish contact with research analysts. The RFS may also be of some utility to OCR in servicing the requests of non-Agency customers. The magnitude of these requirements is not at all clear, but it is probably small as compared to



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the informal communication which already exists between analysts within the Agency. If the volume of expected usage is not large then it is doubtful that a requirement exists for a very ambitious RFS. I am therefore concerned that the effort may have been designed on a scale which will require considerable support from the research components and more maintenance resources than OCR can profitably invest in the service at this time.

4. The means as well as the ends of the design may be overambitious. The system design, for example, provides for the creation of two files, a component profile and a file profile. Information requested for the component profile includes the names of its analysts and a description of its files. Much of the same information is duplicated in the format for the file profile. Neither format provides in itself a key to the construction of a central referral file, since component names may be ambiguous, such as the often used, Special Projects Branch, and files are often described by equally ambiguous expressions or acronyms. Components will be indexed under an OCR Requester Organizational Code. It may also be necessary to structure the assembled file profile data cards under some logical system such as the ISC or other code.

5. It is not clear that sufficient consideration has been given to whether a less ambitious system would permit OCR to provide adequate referral service. It might be much simpler for OCR to maintain a directory of research components by missions, organized under shallow indexing control. Users could be referred by OCR to the appropriate research branch, which would then indicate whether or not it possesses file and analytical capabilities on particular subjects. The problem can also be approached in terms of analyst assignments by research office. The Economic Research Area of ORR publishes such a list, primarily for its own use. Entitled a List of Analysts and Assignments (copy attached), this directory is revised annually. Although simply conceived, and designed to facilitate easy compilation, it is organized by research branch, identifies the branch personnel, provides their telephone numbers, and enumerates in broad terms the assignment of each analyst. Annual updating usually makes little demand on the branch chief and his

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submission is easily reproduced for inclusion in the directory. A simple guide of this kind for each research office could readily enable OCR to refer prospective customers to analysts responsible for each major subject. A telephone call to the likely person could quickly establish whether he maintains files and has an analytical capability to respond to a particular problem.

6. If adopted, this approach would make available to OCR a set of shallow indexes to analyst assignments. For referral purposes, shallow indexing is much less costly to maintain and possibly more satisfactory in application than an effort to maintain depth indexes of research components and research files. A shallow index has the advantage of placing the burden for zeroing in on the precise subject of interest on the flexibility of human beings. The prospective customer is given a lead which he then pursues in order to ascertain whether the person contacted has the kind of information desired. Through discussion, the quantity of information, its depth, and other characteristics can be readily ascertained. In a referral system it is assumed that likely repositories will be personally contacted anyway. It therefore follows that a simple and general personnel assignment guide is more efficient than a detailed depth catalogue of resources.

7. In conclusion, it is my impression that the proposed RFS is somewhat more ambitious than required by most potential users and that its creation and maintenance on the scale proposed will be somewhat less than fully rewarding to both the users and to OCR. OCR appropriately recognizes, however, that in a somewhat contracted operational mode it may find it necessary to rely on certain agency components to provide a file referral service. It is my judgment that a useful service of this type can be established and maintained with less effort and burden than that proposed by CHIVE.


Executive Assistant
Research and Reports

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Attachment:
As stated above.